

### **Geographic Review Panel 3 – American River/Eastside Tribs**

**Proposal number:** 2001-F213    **Short Proposal Title:** San Joaquin River Dissolved Oxygen Depletion Next Phase Funding Request for 2001

**1. Applicability to CALFED ERP Goals and Implementation Plan and CVPIA priorities, and relevance to ERP and CVPIA priorities for your region.** The proposal addresses a high priority problem under the ERP and the CVPIA's AFRP. The proposed "project," however, actually consists of a fairly loose association of 19 individual projects, some of which are more directly applicable to achievement of CALFED and CVPIA goals than others.

**2. Linkages/coordination with previously funded projects or other restoration activities in your region.** The proposal points out a number of linkages with salmon restoration projects in San Joaquin tributaries. There are also potential linkages with CALFED's South Delta Improvement Project (e.g., ag barriers, tidal operation of the Head of Old River Barrier, etc.), Department of Interior efforts to provide drainage to CVP contractors in the San Joaquin basin (salt and nutrient loading management), and to the Corps of Engineers' Comprehensive Plan effort (e.g., riparian corridor wetlands restoration as a tool for reducing nutrient loading to the mainstem) among many others. The proposal also states that one of its work elements (Upstream Watershed and River Water Quality Monitoring) will coordinate and share data with a UC-Davis sampling effort (underway since 1999) "...so as to eliminate duplicity [sic?] and redundancy (p.10)."

**3. Feasibility, especially the project's ability to move forward in a timely and successful manner.** Feasibility among the 19 projects ranges from fairly straightforward to almost impossible. Combining our knowledge of local conditions with concerns expressed by TARP and with comments from the outside Independent Peer Review Panel which reviewed this proposal one month after (unfortunately) it was submitted, we have serious concerns about the feasibility of the following elements: (a) Algal Flux Study, (b) Sediment Oxygen Demand – Direct Measurement, (c) Algal Growth and Decomposition, and (d) Real-Time Monitoring of Fish Migration.

**4. Qualifications of the applicants and others involved in implementing the proposed project.** Varied.

**5. Local involvement (including environmental compliance).** High.

**6. Cost.** Main goals and objectives could be met with about half the funds requested (See below).

**7. Cost sharing.** Minor, less than 4%.

**8. Additional comments.** There was a big disparity in the way this proposal was ranked by the two independent technical reviewers. The reviewer who revealed that he/she

worked for the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board ranked it “Very Good,” whereas the reviewer with no connection to the San Joaquin Dissolved Oxygen Steering Committee ranked it “Poor.” The TARP apparently tried to split the difference by ranking it “Good.” All technical reviewers seemed to agree, however, that some of the proposed projects should be postponed and that the remaining project elements should be more explicitly integrated with overall project goals and with each other. Unfortunately, none of the technical reviewers provided a list of which projects to keep and which to drop. Instead, it was suggested by the TARP that this culling task be performed by the applicants with “...help from the technical committee [i.e., the Technical Advisory Committee of the San Joaquin DO Steering Committee]...” The problem with this advice is that (with the exception of a small minority) the applicants are the San Joaquin DO Technical Advisory Committee. To facilitate subsequent stages of the 2001 PSP decision making process, the Geographic Review Panel thus identified the following projects as “high priority” because of their obvious feasibility, timeliness, cost-effectiveness and direct applicability to management of the DO problem:

Continuous Water Quality Monitoring  
Discrete Water Quality Sampling  
Sediment Deposition and Re-suspension  
Tidal Exchange and Residence Time  
Upstream Watershed and River Water Quality Monitoring  
DO Management Model Expansion and Calibration  
Jet Aeration Evaluation  
Implementation Strategies Development  
Implementation Strategies Modeling  
Indirect Impacts to South and Central Delta DO  
Administration and Outside Peer Review (Task 5)

Funding only these elements of the proposal would reduce its cost to about one-half the original cost, i.e., to about \$1,200,000. Funding should be contingent upon better synthesis of the many elements of this proposal as well as a more substantial local cost share.

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## **Regional Ranking**

**Panel Ranking:** Medium high, with the conditions identified under additional comments above.

**Provide a brief explanation of your ranking:** The proposal has a number of shortcomings, most of which are described in the technical review comments. Nevertheless, the data and information that would result from the work contained in this proposal, especially the projects listed above as “high priority,” are vital to any serious effort to manage the DO problem in the ship channel.